

Melrose Plantation, African House  
Louisiana Route 119  
Melrose  
Natchitoches Parish  
Louisiana

HABS No. LA-2-69-B

HABS  
LA,  
35-MELRO,  
IB-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

ADDITIONAL  
FOLLOWS...

Historic American Building Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington DC

"AFRICAN HOUSE"

Melrose Plantation, Melrose P. O., Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana.

HABS  
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1B-

Physical Data

Present owner: Mrs. C. G. Henry.

Present occupant and use: Used as outbuilding (storage).

Description (present condition)Wall construction: First floor  $13\frac{1}{4}$ " brick - second floor 4 x 12 timbers laid horizontally on edge - dovetailed at corners.

Size and form: 17'x22'-6", rectangle. Number stories: Two.

Exterior openings, windows: 3 small barred windows first floor, casements on second.

Exterior openings, doors: 2 front doors first floor 7/8" batten; front door second floor  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " panel door, glass top panels.

Cornice: None - 9' overhanging eaves gave appearance of African thatch roof.

Roofing: New wood shingles, new wood nailing strips.

Chimneys: None.

InteriorFloors: First floor new brick, second floor  $7/8$ "x $3\frac{1}{4}$ " new wood floor.

Doors: 2 new panelled doors at stair, first floor.

Trim: None. Mantels: None.

Stairways: New stairway, first to second floor. Plasterwork: None.

Additions and alterations: Staircase new, new brick floor, first floor; new wood floor second; new roofing.

Historical Data

Year of erection: About 1820.

1824

Built for (first owner): Not ascertained, however in ante-bellum days plantation called "Yucca Plantation".

Architect or designer: Not ascertained.

African House

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1B.

Original intended use: Probably a slave keep.

Notable events and occupants: At the time of the Civil War a <sup>(AUGUSTIN METOYIER)</sup> Mulatto family owned Melrose Plantation. For this reason, it is said, it was not burned by the troops as were other plantations in the state. According to Francois Mignon in a letter to Mr. Peterson dated November 26, 1940, "When Melrose was taken over by the Henrys in the latter part of the 19th century, there were stocks and a pillory in the African House and colored people who lived on the place declared that in ante-bellum days the building was used to house recalcitrant slaves. The iron barred windows and brick walls might lend credence to that theory. Especially is this true in the case of the brick walls, for, ..... mud, rather than brick, was used for the most part for building material in this locality in ante-bellum days."

Prepared by Adolph H. Felder <sup>Per 2.B.9.</sup> November 30, 1940.  
Adolph H. Felder, Junior Architect  
Historic American Buildings Survey

Approved: Clemens Date Dec. 12 1940  
District Officer

12/16/40

Melrose Plantation, African House  
(Yucca Plantation, African House;  
African House)  
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Addendum to:

African House  
(filed under master record, Melrose Plantation)  
Melrose  
Natchitoches Parish  
Louisiana

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35-MELRO,  
1B-

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE	COUNTY	TOWN OR VICINITY
LOUISIANA	NATCHITOCHES PARISH	MELROSE
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME)		HABS NO.
MELROSE PLANTATION, AFRICAN HOUSE		LA-2-69 B
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE		
Yucca Plantation, African House; African House		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES)		
Louisiana Route 119.		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE)	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE)	
Late 18th or early 19th century		
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE)		
A small structure with an interesting roof reminiscent of an African design; one of the earliest buildings built by blacks. The building may originally have been used for utilitarian purposes.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE)		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS)		
See "Exterior Features of Note"		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE)		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE		
Wall construction: heavy horizontal, square timbers dovetailed at the corners, a <u>piece sur piece</u> type of construction used by the earliest French settlers in Louisiana. The roof overhang is supported by long round struts extending out from above the brick wall to the (con't. on page 2)		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED)		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.)		
National Register of Historic Places. Inventory-Nomination Form for African House (under the title, Melrose Plantation).		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION	DATE	
Susan McCown, HABS Architectural Historian	September 18, 1985.	

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EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE:

plate that supports the rafters. (copied from National Register of Historic Places nomination form for this building, titled under Melrose Plantation).

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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